

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

Springfield, Illinois

CBD Project Number 104-149-001

October 7, 2019

Fine Arts Review Committee Meeting Minutes

Fine Arts Committee Members

Andy Van Meter, Illinois Arts Council

Robert Sill, Illinois State Museum

Lance Tawzer, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

Other Attendees

Lawrence Patterson, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

Linda Norbut Suits, Capital Development Board

Felicia Burton, Capital Development Board

Joseph Ritter, Capital Development Board

- The meeting was called to order at 1:21 p.m. when Linda Norbut Suits passed around the sign-in sheet. The Committee members and other attendees introduced themselves.
- After introductions, Ms. Suits informed the Committee on the project updates. The Committee was informed that Preston Jackson, the third artist, had dropped out but the final selection could still be completed with the remaining two artists. Ms. Suits also explained that there would be more money available in the budget for the artists. The Committee expressed interest in asking the artists what they would do with a bigger budget.
- Ms. Suits then discussed the legislative requirements of the Fine Arts Review Committee. The meeting is subject to the Open Meetings Act. This means that the meeting would be recorded and meeting minutes posted online. The meeting was also open for members of the public to attend. The Committee also discussed the difference between the voting and non-voting members.
- The Committee discussed the selection process. There was a brief discussion of allowable questions. Mr. Ritter then passed out the score sheets. Ms. Suits explained that the score sheets were for the convenience of the Committee and were not collected at the end. Ms. Suits then explained the selection memo to the Committee. Members would rank their preferences of the

artists and the memo would be sent to the Chair of the Fine Arts Council who would concur with the Committee findings. The winning artist would then be placed under contract.

- With no further questions from the Committee, Ms. Suits invited Lynn Basa, the first artist, and Ms. Basa began setting up her presentation.
- Ms. Basa began her presentation with an overview of some of her past projects from around the country. A common theme that emerged from her work was the idea of art as a “wayfinding” device. This provided a segue into Ms. Basa’s proposal.
- Ms. Basa briefly discussed her initial survey of the site, mentioning that it was not clear where the museum was. She noted that, for a first-time visitor to the area, it could be difficult for them to find the museum. Thus, Ms. Basa reiterated the need for that corner of the museum to have a recognizable landmark and signage.
- Ms. Basa stated that she wanted her artwork to focus on two specific facets of the Lincoln lore: his famous stovepipe hat and the importance of literacy. She mentioned that the goals of the artwork was to “be instantly recognizable with Lincoln; to be aesthetically inclusive to a diverse population; to reflect the approachable, interactive exhibit design within the museum; to symbolize that this is both a library and a museum; to provide signage for that side of the building; provide a sight for selfies; and to place artwork where it will have the most impact instead of trying to cover the entire wall.” She also proposed that “a grove of white birch or other tall, thin trees” be planted at the site to complement the artwork.
- For the artwork itself, Ms. Basa proposed a top hat made of a foam form that would be covered with fiber-reinforced epoxy with sculptable epoxy for the finishing details and be sealed in polyurethane. The hat would rest on three books which would be made from an aluminum frame, clad with ¼” and 1/8” aluminum sheets and polyurethane paint with direct-embedded printed pages on aluminum sheets and acrylic letters backlit with LED on the bottom book. Overall, Ms. Basa proposed that the project would take between 25-30 weeks to be completed.
- The Committee asked several questions about the size and final positioning of the structure. Both the Committee members and Ms. Basa expressed interest in the possibility of enlarging the artwork. The Committee also asked about the visitors climbing or leaning against the artwork. Ms. Basa stated that the original intent was to allow people to climb on the artwork but she was flexible and would consider raising the structure higher off the ground to discourage climbing. Finally, the Committee asked about design of and the wordage on the books. Ms. Basa said she would be interested in working with Museum staff to design the books to look like books that were owned by Lincoln.
- With no further questions, the Committee thanked Ms. Basa and she left. Overall, the Committee was very impressed with Ms. Basa’s design proposal, agreeing that it would be an aesthetically pleasing and eye-catching piece that would serve as a landmark for visitors. After their discussion, the Committee welcomed BJ Krivanek to the room and he began setting up his presentation.

- Mr. Krivanek started his presentation with a brief overview of some of his completed projects. After this introduction, he moved into his discussion about his proposed artwork.
- Mr. Krivanek's proposal, "Beacon of Endurance" is a columnar art form that represents both the chronology of Lincoln's life as well as his enduring legacy in American culture. The form itself is reminiscent of several primal forms, such as an industrial smokestack, Civil War artillery, a monument, a tomb, a rocket, or progression through time. The art form itself is also slightly bent, reflecting the challenges of democracy and unresolved issues in the United States. Writing on the lower half of the piece would reflect some of Lincoln's most famous words, while the writing on the upper half would reflect words or phrases that are often associated with Lincoln, Emancipation, and the Civil War. At night several of these words will be projected onto the museum wall. According to Mr. Krivanek, "the words projected into the wall become a beacon of light, articulating core societal principles and issues that are vulnerable, yet they endure in American culture."
- Overall, the proposed structure would be 24'4" tall. 6'6" of this would be 1" thick weathering steel while the remaining 17'8" would be 1/8" stainless steel. The structure would rest on a concrete pad/footing with rebar reinforcing as required by engineering. Krivanek pointed out that he would work with museum staff to finalize the wordage on the structure.
- The Committee asked several questions about maintenance. The artist mentioned that vandalism could be a problem, and he would take this into account when writing his maintenance plan for the sculpture. A Committee member asked if rusting would be a problem with the sculpture. Krivanek explained that, because of the nature of Cor-Ten steel, rusting was natural and the base of the sculpture would take on a rust color after a time. Another member brought up copper oxidation, a problem that effects the library and museum buildings, and asked if this would be a potential problem to the piece. Krivanek did not believe it would. With no further questions, the Committee thanks Mr. Krivanek for his time and the artist left the room with Ms. Suits. Once Ms. Suits returned, the Committee began their final discussion.
- The Committee members were extremely pleased with both design proposals. While the artworks were different in overall design, the Committee was impressed that both artists drew inspiration from literacy for their proposals. After discussing the pros and cons of each piece, the Committee decided to pick Mr. Krivanek for the commission. The selection memorandum was passed around and signed by all FARC members.
- Ms. Suits explained that once the chair of the Illinois Art Council concurred with the Committee's decision, the next step would be to get the artist under contract. Ms. Suits thanked the Committee members and other attendees for their time.
- The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.